

In my [September 2009 blog](#) , I looked back at an essay I penned in September 2003: Twelve Minutes Out. In thinking about this historic day, I have reposted that essay below.

TWELVE MINUTES OUT

Everyone remembers where they were on this day two years ago.

A stay-at-home mom tended to her little ones as she planned out her day.

A coal miner just finished the dreaded third shift and was getting ready to go to sleep.

A farmer had already been up for three hours doing the morning chores.

And just like everyone else, I too was going through my "normal" workday routine at the Capitol when I learned of the attacks in New York City and the Pentagon.

I vividly remember the Capitol complex being evacuated. I was whisked away by the Capitol Police to the top floor of their headquarters where I met up with House and Senate leaders.

The moment I arrived, an officer informed us that an inbound airplane was "12 minutes out." The Congressional leaders in the room began to discuss options and capabilities as I stood by and watched the Capitol Dome out the window.

We waited.

That was the longest 12 minutes of my life.

Fortunately for the American people, and thanks to the leadership of President George W. Bush, those 12 minutes have turned into 24 months.

Immediately after that dreadful day, President Bush told the country that we were fighting a "different kind of war." This was an enemy the United States had never seen the likes of before.

The president also told us that because of this new war, the American people may not even see many of the victories.

As we remember those lives lost in the tragedy of September 11th, the biggest victory for the President and this country is that there has not been a successful attack since we were told that the airplane was "12 minutes out."

This should give all Americans reason to hope.

In the weeks after the attack, the United States formed a broad coalition and destroyed terrorist training camps in Afghanistan. Thanks to these efforts, women there no longer have to live in fear and children are attending school.

In addition, two-thirds of al Qaeda's known leaders have been captured or killed and we have uncovered sleeper cells in the United States.

We also acted in Iraq, where the former regime ruled with brutal tactics, sponsored terror, possessed and used weapons of mass destruction and for 12 years ignored the demands of the UN Security Council.

Before September 11th, terrorists feared nothing. There was no threat of sustained response when innocent people were attacked or killed. They thought we were weak.

They were wrong.

Similarly, before World War II, the United States was perceived as weak and we were attacked. However, all it did was make us stronger as Americans rallied around President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The tragedy of two years ago has turned into this generation's calling. We have risen to the task of fighting terrorism at home and abroad.

The steel of American resolve has given us victories and reason for hope.

But we must not stop here. We must keep our eyes on the future.

My three young children often visit me in my Capitol Hill office. Oftentimes I take them with me to vote on the House floor.

As we walk across Independence Avenue to the Capitol building I can't help but think of that dreadful day two years ago when the plane was "12 minutes out" and how close our Capitol came to being destroyed.

I look at my children and wonder what their generation will face. The only certainty is that only God knows what lies in the path ahead.

We must have confidence knowing that He brought us together in this fight and He has truly protected America the past 24 months.

I have often told my colleagues that God blesses those nations that acknowledge Him. My hope for the next generation is that they will acknowledge our sovereign God and have faith in Him.

I pray that God will continue to bless America as we find our calling and duty in protecting the freedom and human dignity that comes with it.